

March 31, 2017

Ellen Little, Library Circulation Supervisor, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Scripture

Romans 8:28-39

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,
 "For your sake we are being killed all day long;
 we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."
³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Devotional

"Life is good." You've seen the t-shirts, haven't you? The shirts with the wearer's favorite activity performed by a cartoonish figure? The idea is to spread optimism. I always suspect people who wear those shirts of being naïve, however. I mean, have they watched the news? Wars, famines, genocides, kidnapping of young girls in Nigeria, another hurricane with flooding in Haiti, a shooting down the street, a suicide in the family, cancer. The list goes on and on. We aren't left alone with this list, however. We are given this passage from Romans where we are told that *nothing* can come between God and those who love him. What could be more important or more glorious than that!?! Yes, the world brings tribulation. Jesus said it would do so, but he gives us himself, his love, his gift of grace and ultimately eternal life! Nothing—did you hear that?!?!—*nothing* can separate us from the God who loved us in action, to the point of sending Jesus to die on a cross to take away our sin. Soon it will be Good Friday, the darkest day of the Christian calendar, but praise God, Good Friday was only the beginning. Easter is coming, and we are God's beloved!!!

Prayer

Dear God, sometimes life feels overwhelming. Help us to cling to you in these times and to remember that we are your beloved. Thank you, thank you, thank you.